GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:643
ANSWERED ON:11.05.2005
UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Singh Shri Chandra Bhushan

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether 5 per cent of the revenue is collected from the telecom companies to maintain the Universal Service Obligation (USO) fund;

(b) if so, whether the BSNL is the main beneficiary of this fund;

(c) if so, the total fund made available to the BSNL during the last three years;

(d) whether any private company has been able to meet the rural obligation of providing subsidised fixed line services in rural and remote areas;

(e) if so, the details therof;

(f) whether the Government proposes to amend the Telegraph Act in order to get a share from this fund for providing cellular services in rural areas;

(g) if so, the time by which this decision is likely to be taken;

(h) whether the Government has taken up the matter with the administrator of USO fund; and

(i) if so, the reaction of the administrator thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN)

(a) to (i): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (i) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 643 FOR 11TH MAY, 2005 REGARDING UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION FUND.

(a) Universal Service Levy at the rate of 5% of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) is collected from all Telecom Operators except value added service providers.

(b) & (c) Rs. 1805.94 crore have been disbursed to BSNL for providing services in the rural areas. Rs. 297.26 crore, Rs. 197.40 crore and Rs. 1311.28 crore have been disbursed to BSNL in the years 2002-03, 2003-04 & 2004-05 respectively.

(d) & (e) Agreements have been signed with Six Private Service Providers for providing subsidy towards Operation and Maintenance of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) installed by them. They are maintaining 9,185 VPTs now.

(f) to (i) A proposal to provide financial support for setting up passive infrastructure in eligible rural areas to facilitate roll-out of Cellular mobile services is under consideration.